Momonga sat on the throne, looking over the room with eyes that held a little satisfaction, but mainly embarrassment. He noticed the maids and Sebas Tian standing in the corner. They seemed lonely, standing by themselves like that. After making sure that he could give the command that came to his mind, Momonga recalled the order format that had been programmed long ago, and motioned lightly with one hand, moving from top to bottom.

“Kneel.”

Albedo, Sebas, and the six maids simultaneously dropped to one knee, bowing to their lord. Momonga raised his left hand to check the time.

[23:55:48]

It was nearly time.

If he tried calling for a Game Master now, they might be too busy setting off fireworks to respond to Momonga.

Momonga leaned his back against the throne, and lazily gazed at the ceiling.

Since Nazarick had been praised as the most difficult dungeon in the game, some people might think of challenging them on the last day of the game.

When that happened, he intended to be there to meet them, as the guildmaster.

Momonga had sent mails to all his former friends, but only a handful had come.

He was here, waiting for them too. A guildmaster had to welcome his members.

“Relics of the past, huh—”

Momonga lapsed into silent contemplation.

He felt empty now. Still, it had been fun.

He moved his eyes, counting the large flags which hung from the ceiling. There were 41 of them in total, the same number as there were guild members, and each of them bore the members' unique symbols. Momonga pointed to one of them with his finger, but then stopped halfway.

"—I can't waste my time idling here!"

Momonga thought about how he had been preparing to celebrate the end of the game in a flashy way. Yet, nobody had come. The reason was obvious enough -- everyone would prioritize their real lives over a game. It was a sensible conclusion, but at the same time it was also very lonely for Momonga. Therefore, he decided to abandon his plans for tonight.

With a *gata* sound, Momonga forcefully rose to his feet.

"I can't stay still here! At the very least, I'll go out with a bang!"

There was no more time.

Momonga raised his right hand, and funneled power into the ring on his right ring finger.
He touched the Ring of Ainz Ooal Gown, and looked over the list of teleport destinations which popped up. The first to appear was his own room, and Momonga wondered why he had put that in there in the first place. Annoyed, Momonga scrolled through the rest of the destinations.
"There we are!"

His exclamation was filled with joy. He highlighted his desired destination — the surface — and selected it.

He was teleported into a larger room in an instant.

There were long, thin stone tables — or at least there used to be— on either side of him. The floor had been polished until it was like white marble. Behind him, a flight of stairs continued downwards, leading to a pair of large double doors which opened into the first floor of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

This place was the closest to the surface that the ring could take him, to the central mausoleum of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.

“I need to hurry!”

Momonga made haste as he said that.

He glanced at the time on his left hand—

[23:58:03]

—There wasn’t much time left.

It was as though the train bell had rung and the train door was hissing air in preparation to close.

Like a salaryman rushing at full speed down the stairs to catch his train, Guildmaster Momonga cast the ‘Flight’ spell, and soared out of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick into the sprawling swamps that surrounded it.

It was surprisingly difficult to maneuver while flying. It felt like a kind of aerial dogfighting game. However, after long experience with flight, it was easy to control one’s movement through the air. As such, there was no need to concentrate on flying. However, one could not move without using the in-game console.

The foggy swamps came into view almost immediately. He could see the silhouettes of monsters in the mist. Because it was the last day of YGGDRASIL, all the monsters were deactivated. As a result, they could not attack Momonga, nor could he attack them.

That's why, I thought that intruders might come. Today, they could pass through the Gurenbera Swamps without expending any resources.

However, nobody came.

Momonga narrowed his eyes — though his expression did not change — and landed on his chosen destination, an island floating in the middle of the swamp.

It was a strange little island. Cylindrical objects were lined up in a row upon it. Momonga withdrew a small rod with a push-button on the end from his pocket space.

"Let's go!"

As though rebuking himself, Momonga forcefully pressed the button down.
In that instant, the tubes in the ground below him launched a series of glowing balls up into the air all at once.

These were cheap fireworks.

In preparation for this, Momonga had bought 5000 rounds of these fireworks and set them up on this island.
Because they were grouped so closely, the rising fireworks looked like a single big cluster as they soared into the sky.

Ideally, he would have liked to watch this with any of the guild members who had come with him. However, there was nobody beside him.

"…I need to wake up at 4…"

Momonga murmured that to himself as he watched the fireworks ascend on plumes of white smoke.
And then, there was a vast explosion. This was no longer a fireworks display. It looked more like the super-tier spell 'Fallen Down' in action.

The brilliant white light flared in a huge mass of radiance which enveloped Momonga.

Ah…

He didn't think this was the last DMMO game he would play. Momonga, no, the person called Suzuki Satoru had not played any other games like this apart from YGGDRASIL. However, he was still hopeful for the future. Suddenly, he felt a desire to stay here and not return to the real world.

But still—
I guess it feels good like this for now, with the light surrounding me.

Reality resumed several seconds later. Those few moments were the incarnation of Satoru Suzuki's joy.
It seemed he had closed his eyes from the brightness. Momonga frantically opened them.

It was strange.

Because the brain was directly connected to the Megacon, he could close his eyes in the game. Momonga was worried. He thought he might have lost his sight.
“What’s this?” Momonga muttered to himself

He had no idea what was going on.

An unexpected landscape stretched out beneath his feet.
Momonga was floating in the sky, but that was understandable. After all, he had cast a flight spell on himself some time ago.

However, the land below his feet was not a swamp.

It was a ruin.

It wasn’t just one or two ruined buildings. *Was it an abandoned village?* No, this was larger. It looked like an entire city had been reduced to ruins beneath him.

“Hah?”

With an unexpected lack of panic, Momonga calmly checked the time on his left hand.

[0:03:45, 46, 47]

“Hah?!”
Momonga surveyed his surroundings over and over again. The sky was covered in thick, dark clouds, and it was definitely nightfall. Below his feet were the ruins of a destroyed city.

“What, what’s this?”

It was definitely past midnight. He considered that the time displayed by the system clock had gone haywire.
“Did they delay the server shutdown?”

Countless possibilities popped up in his head, but he was still a long way from coming a definitive conclusion. However, the most likely possibility was that they had delayed the server shutdown.
If that was the case, he might be able to open a ticket with a GM. Momonga hurriedly activated the call function which he had left unused until now — and his hand stopped.

The console did not appear.

“What the…?”

He couldn’t feel anything.

It was as though he had been cut off from the system entirely.

“…What the hell is this?”

As he said this, he felt that he should land before doing his thinking. The use of the ‘Flight’ spell would cause a console to appear to control one’s movements, but Momonga realised that he could not find it, nor did he need it.

Momonga slowly descended from a great height and landed easily on the ground.

“This is…”

Momonga looked at his hands, and saw nothing but bones. He was keenly aware that these were his own hands.

“What, what the hell’s going on?!”

Earlier, Momonga had been flying very skillfully. He moved through the air almost unconsciously, as though he were moving his right hand. He realised that he had been controlling the ‘Flight’ spell with his thoughts.

This was a very strange situation.

However, despite finding himself in a strange situation like this, he felt surprisingly calm, and only a little afraid.

He suddenly remembered the words of one of his comrades.

Impatience is the seed of defeat, while constant, calm and reasoned thinking is a necessity. Calm your heart and widen your vision. Take in everything within your thoughts and you can turn the situation around.

The first thing to do was to find out where he was.

If only someone else was here…

He used the ‘Flight’ spell to observe his surroundings from the air. Well, there were a lot of ruined houses all around him.

He had a bad feeling about this. It was as though he could sense something peeking at him from the narrow gaps in between the destroyed houses.

Being in an open area would give him a clear line of sight to the region around him, but at the same time he was completely exposed to any opponents who cared to look.

Momonga considered that someone might try to PK him under these strange circumstances. Therefore, until the mystery was unraveled, it would be better to travel stealthily.

That being the case, he began the first step towards that.

‘Complete Invisibility’.

Momonga cast the spell. It was a spell that was far superior to ‘Invisibility’. He would be completely invisible to anyone unless they used specialized magic to see him.

After that, Momonga considered using a skill that he had relied on when he had played Yggdrasil. Although it had many advantages, it was not very useful when used by an undead creature which had gone invisible. Still, it would be useful as a decoy, since he could not be sure that his encounters with other beings would be amicable.

Should I hide my face? Maybe… but then, wouldn’t I be suspicious of anyone who hid their face in YGGDRASIL? Oh, almost—

After that, Momonga activated one of his passive skills. It was a skill which could detect the undead.

As he worried about whether or not the skill might work, it activated. In that moment, Momonga suddenly had a bad feeling.

“Cheh!”

Momonga crouched down against a nearby wall. To be precise, he moved himself so he would be concealed from the direction of the nearest undead reaction.

What? An undead reaction from the side, moving randomly? Where did it come from?

Momonga clung tightly to the wall and froze there. The undead reaction did not tell him anything about the strength of his opponent. The highest-ranked undead could even see through ‘Complete Invisibility’.

He had two options.

One was to move away from here, or to be more precise, from the undead reaction. The other was to check the undead’s level and see if he could deal with it.

However, there was no guarantee that he would be able to find a safe place if he moved away from here. In that case, it would be safer to stay here, where he could keep track of the undead.
In addition, Momonga was also undead, and if his opponent was of a lower level than him, he would not have to worry about fighting it.

Well, as long as there’s nothing other than undead out there…

Momonga tried to recall the feeling he had while using ‘Flight’. His confidence increased.

I can do it. For some reason, I’m also confident that I can use attack magic without problems. …Feels kind of bad, like I’m not myself any more — No, that’s a question

I'll worry about later. In any case, as long as I can 'Teleport' I have a way to escape, even if it's just teleporting straight up into the sky.

Momonga looked around his surroundings, making sure to cover all the blind spots in his vision. In a stroke of luck, he found a nearby ruined house with walls that were were just the right size to conceal him.

Momonga dashed toward it, slipping in through a crack in one of the walls.

The ceiling had collapsed and its remains were around his feet, but the four walls of the house were still sturdy.

As Momonga thought about casting a spell, he noted that the technological level here seemed very low.

The houses weren't made of reinforced concrete. At least, that was the conclusion he came to after seeing the wood debris at his feet.

"As I thought… is this YGGDRASIL?"

What he saw now didn't resemble anything he had seen in the real world. However, that still left a lot of questions in his mind.

Momonga shelved that question aside for now and cast another spell.

"'Distant Vision'."

He took control of the scrying sensor and steered it into the air. The worst case scenario was if his opponent was an undead which could see through invisibility,

and he had to pray that his opponent did not possess any means of blocking and counterattacking against information-gathering magic.

“What’s this…”

It wasn’t anything like what he had used in YGGDRASIL at all.

In YGGDRASIL, the ‘Distant Vision’ spell would display what it saw on a flat, magical screen. That screen could be expanded or shrunken at will.

Now, instead, the scrying sensor’s field of vision overlapped his own.

It was a strange and bizarre feeling. However, it did not present any problems in the spell’s use. He controlled it naturally and freely, and the expanded sensory abilities he had seemed like part of him.

Momonga ignored the slight panic he felt and directed ‘Distant Vision’ to put the undead in his sight.

It was a ‘Zombie’. Its name was blue, which meant that it was a trivial opponent for him. With that done, Momonga continued looking for more undead in the vicinity.

Momonga ended the ‘Distant Vision’ spell with a “whew”, as though he had given up. After all, sustaining ‘Total Invisibility’ was a major drain on his mana reserves.

He wanted to make sure of his own strength. If his spells were as potent as they were back then, he wouldn’t have any problems here.

If he could, he would like to destroy that zombie in order to test his strength, but that ran the risk of aggroing all the undead in the zone.

Since Momonga was also an undead creature like the zombie, there was a high chance it would not attack him. Thus, he could focus on gathering information, and not defending himself.

After deciding his course of action, Momonga moved out to investigate the ruined city.

From his investigations, he confirmed that the tech level in this place was low. It resembled a movie set, with its complete lack of modern machinery. There were no cables or pipes buried in the ground, although it still looked like this was a civilized place.

This was the first time he had seen a wood-burning stove outside of Yggdrasil.

"—Is this Yggdrasil? Ah, no, it's far too different."

Slowly, Momonga began to realise the truth.

He was definitely not in the game. However, if that were the case, what of himself? His body was a skeleton, yet he could still move.

The common sense he had lived with over the years was suddenly shattered, and the new logic of his current state had yet to sink into Momonga. He advanced onto the main street, and as he looked down its length, he saw what might have been gates once, but which were a pile of rubble now.

"Still, what happened here? If there was an explosion, it wouldn't have brought a whole city down like this. Did a typhoon pass through here or something?"

As Momonga was musing on the city's history, he suddenly flinched.

"What?"

There was an undead reaction in the distance.

"…This is…"

It wasn't moving slowly, like a zombie. It was running away from him at top speed.

Momonga's eyes narrowed.

This was no zombie. Whatever it was, it was intelligent.

"I won't let you escape, information source."

His body floated lightly into the air, and then surged forward at great speed. His opponent was moving in a zig-zag pattern, which showed its familiarity with the layout of the city. However, the speed of Momonga's flight more than made up for that advantage.

Momonga single-mindedly charged after his opponent, and eventually managed to catch a glimpse of it. It wore a hood and a mantle, and it turned its head to look behind its small body many times as it ran through the narrow alleys of the city.

Eventually, Momonga descended in front of the figure. Because it had been looking behind itself just as Momonga landed in front of it, it didn't see Momonga and crashed right into him.

The short figure bounced off Momonga and fell on its butt with a *dosun* sound. The hood shifted, and he could see golden hair beneath it.

"…Good evening. It's a cloudy night out, it seems."

"…"

The short figure did not reply to the greeting, only panted heavily as she tried to catch her breath.

"I have a few things I'd like to ask you. Would you mind answering my questions?"

Under the hood, Momonga saw that her eyes were deep crimson in color.

A child? A street rat… no, she doesn't stink. Well, she's undead so I don't think she'd stink much anyway… and she's too tidy for that, in any case.

"…I'll say it again. I have some questions I'd like to ask you. Do you mind answering them?"

The child nodded her head vigorously.

"…I am… Suzuki Satoru. What is your name?"

Her crimson pupils widened into circles.

"…a,u…a…a"

Her voice was barely audible, and he couldn't understand her words at all.

Is she not Japanese? Is that child not a player?

"Your name is?"

"…a, u…a…a"

He felt a little foolish as he realised that she might be a foreigner, and that might have been her name.

"AuAa? That's a strange name… is it?"

The child shook her head.

"That's not your name? Then, does that mean you can't pronounce your name?"

Again, she shook her head.

The child was desperately trying to speak, but Momonga could not derive any meaning from her words.

"Where are your parents…"

As she said that, Momonga remembered that she was undead, and he wouldn't be likely to have parents. Still, the child's reaction was a little strange.

The child hung her head, then shook it.

She seemed to be saying, “they’re gone”.

I should think of how to say goodbye, then, Momonga thought as he looked over the child who spoke with queer pronunciation. Suddenly, she spoke again in a very small voice, but this time, he could understand her,

“—ino —asrith Inberun.”

As she repeated herself, Momonga could finally understand what she was saying.

“My name is Kino Fasrith Inberun.”

That was the girl’s name.